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Green HRM's Effect on Employees' Eco-Friendly Behavior and Green Performance: A Study in the Portuguese Tourism Sector

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Abstract: This study examines how Green Human Resource Management practices improve employees' eco-friendly behavior and green performance, and the mediator effect of affective commitment in these relationships. Our sample included 449 employees, from different Portuguese tourism organizations. The results demonstrate that the implementation of Green Human Resource Management practices produces a positive effect on eco-friendly behavior, green performance, and affective commitment, with commitment mediating the mentioned relationship. Therefore, when organizations apply greener Human Resources Management, they might influence positively the attitudes and behaviors of their employees, improving their affective commitment and, consequently, their eco-friendly behaviors and green performance. This research is innovative as it integrates Green Human Resource Management, eco-friendly behavior, green performance, and affective commitment in a single research model, expanding the knowledge over these topics, and suggesting that organizations should establish Green Human Resource Management policies, especially those that strengthen employees' affective attachment and improve their eco-friendly behavior as well as the organization's green performance.

Keywords: affective commitment; employees' eco-friendly behavior; green HRM; green performance; Portuguese tourism sector



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1. Introduction

The growing wave of globalization has enhanced society's awareness of environmental responsibilities [1], particularly the need for companies to embrace sustainable practices that may heighten their market position both nationally and internationally [2]. Equally important is the pressing issue of the green transition for organizations. In response to this important matter, Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) has emerged as a modern evolution of HR practices, focusing on environmentally friendly principles [3]. GHRM integrates sustainability into the core of human resource management [4], gaining increasing attention for its potential impact on employee behavior [5–7]. However, research on the intersection of sustainability and GHRM within Portugal's hospitality and tourism sectors remains limited, leaving crucial questions unanswered regarding how to effectively inspire employee behaviors that support green initiatives in the workplace [8].

With specific regard to the tourism industry, which corresponds to the population under study, most hotels are increasingly under pressure to protect the environment by providing more environmentally friendly services [9]. This makes GHRM emerge as a key

strategic approach in tourism businesses to recruit, train, and nurture human resources engaged in greener practices, especially supporting business sustainability [8].

Previous studies have mostly focused on investigating how GHRM practices help workers understand the importance of implementing more environmentally friendly measures, as they constitute positive organizational actions that translate current environmental concerns [6]. Despite its growing importance, there remains a significant gap in understanding how GHRM shapes outcomes [10], particularly at the individual level. A key area of interest lies in the mediating role of affective commitment in linking GHRM practices with eco-friendly behaviors, which has yet to be fully explored. When individuals align with their organization's environmentally friendly goals, they naturally adopt greener attitudes and behaviors that resonate with and reinforce the organization's green values. This is because GHRM practices, such as green training, green engagement, green pay, green performance appraisals, and job descriptions focused on ecological issues help employees obtain clear information about the environment and adopt voluntary behaviors that ensure that their environmental responsibilities are fulfilled [11].

This study aims to investigate how GHRM drives affective commitment, eco-friendly behaviors, and overall organizational green performance. Additionally, it explores the pivotal role of affective commitment as a mediator in the relationship between GHRM and these eco-conscious outcomes. To empirically analyze the research model, a quantitative correlational approach was developed, using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) to have access to the hypothesis testing as proposed in this paper.

Important to reinforce at this point is that the impact of GHRM in the workplace has predominantly been examined at the organizational level, with limited focus on its effects on the individual level of analysis [12,13], particularly in terms of employees' eco-friendly behaviors and green performance. This study addresses that gap, offering a theoretical contribution by exploring GHRM's influence at the individual level. Moreover, affective commitment plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of GHRM practices. In this study, it acts as a mediator, conducting the impact of these practices on employees' attitudes and behaviors. This serves as another important contribution, highlighting the influence of affective commitment in driving green initiatives within organizations. Overall, this study aims to bridge a critical gap in the existing literature by fully exploring the impact of GHRM on relevant workers' attitudes and behaviors. It offers valuable insights into the impact of GHRM on both organizations and employees, particularly by incorporating a mediator key variable to uncover the mechanisms that drive key work outcomes [6,14]. Specifically, the study examines how GHRM fosters affective commitment, which in turn promotes eco-friendly behavior and enhances green performance. This study's purpose is focused on understanding if GHRM practices produce a positive impact on employees' eco-friendly behavior and green performance as these seem relevant behavioral outputs regarding the important issue of green transition in workplace locations. The study also aims to clarify whether workers' affective commitment plays a mediator role in these relationships and regarding the study's main purpose. This study has, thus, three main objectives:

Objective 1—to understand the impact of GHRM practices on employee's eco-friendly behavior;

Objective 2—to understand the impact of GHRM practices on green performance;

Objective 3—to clarify the existence of the mediation effect of workers' affective commitment over the relation between GHRM practices on employees' eco-friendly behavior and green performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Green HRM and Affective Commitment

GHRM arises from the need to address the expanding role of HRM in the evolution of companies, namely through more sustainable businesses [15]. GHRM represents a goal-oriented system of HRM practices with the overall aim of achieving strategic environmental objectives [4], offering employees prospects to participate in green activities.

According to Renwick et al. [16], it is possible to categorize GHRM practices at three levels: (1) the GHRM that concerns the development of green skills in employees through green recruitment, selection, and training; (2) the implementation of GHRM aimed at motivating green employees by rewarding their green performance; and (3) the GHRM related to involving employees in company tasks, empowering them, and creating a green friendly organizational culture. It is expected that when top management is committed to the environment and the green intellectual capital of the organization where they work, they will lead the implementation of Green HRM by attracting, developing, and retaining environmentally aware employees [17], facilitating the implementation of GHRM and making their human resources more aligned and committed to the company's green goals.

Affective commitment, in turn, as one of the dimensions of organizational commitment established by Allen and Meyer [18], refers to the emotional attachment and identification of employees with the organization where they work [19], helping human resource managers to understand how employees are emotionally attached to the organization, how they identify with its values, and how aligned they are with its goals [20].

The social identity theory underpins the theoretical framework to rationalize the relationship between GHRM and affective commitment. In fact, it is assumed that employees who possess positive organizational values [21] are motivated to develop affective bonds with the organization. According to Benkhoff [22], social identity is an integral part of an individual's self-concept. Thus, employees should be more likely to identify with organizations that have high prestige and a good image (for example, those labeled as "green" or "eco-friendly"), which, in turn, might improve their self-concept, self-image, and self-worth [23]. Drawing on the principles of Social Identity Theory, organizations that actively promote green initiatives, such as GHRM, are likely to enhance their corporate image and reputation [24]. This positive perception fosters a stronger psychological connection between employees and the organization, leading them to view their work as more meaningful. Consequently, employees are more likely to identify with the company and develop deeper affective commitment. Social Identity Theory, therefore, helps explain the underlying mechanism through which GHRM enhances affective commitment by strengthening employees' identification with the organization.

Thus, employees' perceptions of the implementation of GHRM practices in companies will not only promote the development of green skills and competencies in their employees but will also influence their attitudes and consequently increase their affective commitment to the organization in which they work [25–27]. Thus, the first hypothesis (H1) is established as follows:

H1. *GHRM positively impacts Affective Commitment.*

2.2. Green HRM and Employees' Eco-Friendly Behavior

According to Tuan [28], there is increasing interest in studying the impact of green HRM practices on employees' green behaviors in tourism sector organizations in a wide variety of contexts, as employees' green behaviors are one possible strategy pursued by organizations to improve green performance and achieve sustainability goals [29].

Employee green behaviors consist of the behaviors employees produce with a positive impact on the environment by reducing the effect of human actions on it [30,31], including activities such as water conservation, efficient use of resources, waste reduction, energy saving, and recycling [32]. The adoption of greener initiatives, in general, will promote a green culture, for example, through the involvement of employees in such implementation, who in turn have been recruited taking into account their environmental awareness and sensitivity, providing them with green training and increasing their behavioral motivation, which will make them more prone to engage in green action, especially in the tourism sector [6,33–36].

According to the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) theory, performance depends on a three-way interactive function of ability, motivation, and opportunity and it

can be applied to predict organizational performance [37]. Bos-Nehles et al. [38] state that organizational performance depends on ability, motivation, and opportunity through the combinative model. Thus, practices to promote employees' ability, such as training, are important to increase corporate performance. Applying this reasoning to a green context, green performance management encourages employees to share and apply the environmental knowledge and skills gained through green training, ultimately enhancing their green capabilities [39]. GHRM practices boost employees' sustainable performance by enhancing their ability, motivation, and opportunities. Green rewards, compensations, and incentives motivate employees to contribute to environmental goals, while green training and development improve their skills and attitudes towards sustainability. Together, these factors foster a workplace environment that promotes eco-friendly behaviors among employees, aligning their actions with the organization's green objectives. Therefore, following the AMO framework, GHRM practices positively contribute to the employee's sustainable performance (through green rewards, compensations, and incentives), and employees' attitudes (through green training and development), which in turn, promotes employees' eco-friendly behavior.

Hence, the second hypothesis is established (H2):

H2. *GHRM positively impacts Employees' Eco-Friendly Behavior.*

2.3. Green HRM and Green Performance

In an increasingly competitive era, there is a growing need for companies to be more concerned with aspects that they might not have been concerned with before, such as environmental and social protection and care for the environment and society [40], as consumers are increasingly looking for environmentally friendly products and services, preferring companies that do not jeopardize the health of the planet and the well-being of society [41].

GHRM, in turn, can help eliminate unfavorable bearings of business activities on the environment and on society [42] and, at the same time, improve their green performance, i.e., not only through the use of more sustainable products and waste reduction but also through the adoption of more sustainable management policies and measures, particularly with regard to HRM practices themselves [43], with employees often being considered true agents of change in organizations with regard to this aspect.

Furthermore, the promotion of greener practices and support of environmental issues by senior management contributes to greater resource efficiency, reduces associated costs, and makes employees have a more positive perception of green practices in the company which will consequently result in a more positive green performance [15]. Green training is seen as a true means of enhancing green performance, as, it empowers employees with knowledge, attitudes, and skills, which can help them to identify environmental issues as well as take more appropriate actions, in a work context to improve green performance [6,11,44–46].

Green performance is defined as the commitment of companies to protect the environment and demonstrate that they operate in a sustainable way [47], through the practice of environmental activities aimed at diminishing the harmful outcomes of their activity on the environment [6], without jeopardizing the surrounding environment and society itself, protecting the quality of natural resources and promoting the well-being of the general public [48,49].

Thus, the implementation of GHRM practices, as a significant predictor of more engaged employees, has a positive influence on achieving sustainable corporate performance [3,13,33,50–52], such as green recruitment and selection practices, training, performance evaluation, compensation, and remunerations, as they create greener awareness and competencies in the employees [53,54].

Blumberg and Pringle [55] suggest interactions among ability, motivation, and opportunity (AMO theory) used to examine the relationship between HRM and performance.

According to AMO theory, performance depends on a three-way interactive function of ability, motivation, and opportunity and it can be applied to predict organizational performance [37]. Extending this reasoning to the green perspective, the AMO framework has also been employed to discuss the interactive effects of GHRM practices on environmental performance [39]. The AMO framework is suited to be proposed to explore and explain how GHRM practices enhance environmental performance. For instance, green training improves employees' environmental abilities, green rewards, and incentives boost their motivation to engage in eco-friendly behaviors, and green policies create opportunities for them to apply these behaviors. In this way, the AMO framework helps explain how GHRM practices work interactively to elevate an organization's overall environmental performance.

Therefore, the third hypothesis is established (H3):

H3. *Green HRM positively impacts on Green Performance.*

2.4. Mediating Role of Affective Commitment

Successful companies with the best GHRM practices tend to make employees feel safer and with greater well-being at work, as well as become more affectively engaged and committed to the organization [56–60], especially in the tourism sector [56] and, therefore, are more likely to improve their behaviors in a work context.

The implementation of sustainable and GHRM practices is a strong predictor of more engaged employees who seek support from the organization and increase their performance [13,14,33,61], and for this, it is essential that companies provide support and a more unburdened organizational environment for their employees, so that a more positive green environment is established in which employees are willing to commit to higher levels of work performance [13,27,54,57,62,63].

Affective commitment alone constitutes the strongest predictor of employees' work-related behaviors [64], having a very positive impact on the work environment [65], namely by creating more dedication and loyalty towards the organization [66] and consequently improving eco-friendly behaviors in the work context, especially in the tourism sector [3,51].

Following the premises of social exchange theory (SET) [67], when employees recognize compensations from their organizations, they feel obligated to reciprocate [68]. SET can be used to explain why employees with positive perceptions of HRM practices improve their commitment to the organization and increase key behaviors at work [69]. Extending these arguments in the green context, GHRM practices provide the required green knowledge, abilities, and skills to employees to align their environmental behaviors, and give them opportunities to participate in green activities at the workplace. In accordance with the premises of SET, GHRM practices prepare employees with the necessary environmental knowledge, abilities, and skills, and the reciprocity mechanism will allow them to better align workers' behaviors with the organization's sustainability goals. Through green training and development programs, employees gain expertise and reciprocate with involvement in eco-friendly practices. At the same time, GHRM practices also offer opportunities, such as green initiatives and projects, where employees can actively participate in environmentally conscious activities within the workplace, using the reciprocating mechanism. This combination of providing the right knowledge and creating opportunities encourages employees to adopt and maintain green behaviors, ultimately supporting the organization's environmental performance. When employees perceive a positive exchange relationship with their organization through these GHRM policies, they are likely to reciprocate the organization [6]. This stimulates employees' commitment which, in turn, improves eco-friendly behaviors, for instance, saving water and energy consumption, classifying waste, etc., and, therefore, increases the organization's environmental performance.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is posited:

H4. *The relationship between GHRM and Employees' Eco-Friendly Behavior will be mediated by Affective Commitment.*

H5. *The relationship between GHRM and Green Performance will be mediated by Affective Commitment.*

The model of analysis is foreseen in Figure 1.

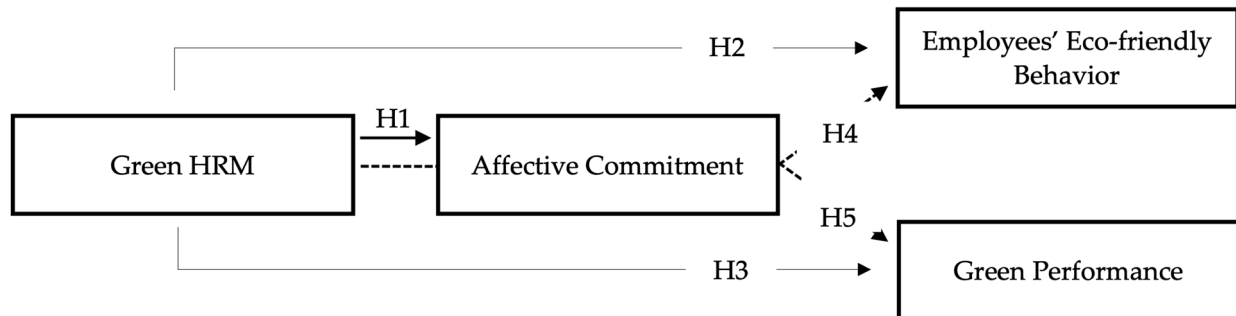


Figure 1. Conceptual research model.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

Self-reported questionnaires were distributed to a convenience sample of 449 employees from several Portuguese organizations in the hospitality and tourism industry. To reach the hotels, a database containing the contacts of the hotels' HR managers was built, followed by email contacts to ensure the collaboration of the specific hotels through the filling of a questionnaire containing the study measures. The questionnaire was disseminated online, through a specific link, allowing reaching a wider geographical area and quickly obtaining a greater number of observations in a short space of time. The questionnaire relied on the voluntary participation of individuals who had worked for at least six months in the organizations, and it had data about the objectives, data confidentiality, and respondents' anonymity.

3.2. Instrument

The Harman technique was carried out to ensure that the data were not influenced by common method bias. Also, the employment of bootstrapping allowed a re-sample distribution by calculating "the statistic of interest in multiple re-samples of the data set, and by sampling "n" units with replacement from the original sample of n units" [70]. Several authors have recommended the use of bootstrapping to assess mediation since the tests are powerful by detecting if the sampling distribution of the mediated effect is skewed away from 0.

The mediation hypothesis was tested using SEM. Testing the hypothesis using SEM provides the added value of having overall fit indices while estimating relationships between variables. For estimating model fit, the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and χ^2 values will be reported.

Lastly, bootstrapping was also applied (at $n = 1000$ units) to permit re-sample distribution by calculating "the statistic of interest in multiple re-samples of the data set and by sampling n units with replacement from the original sample of n units" [71] (p. 190).

Using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "Never"; 5 = "Always"), employees were asked to indicate to what level they agreed with each statement presented.

3.3. Green HRM

This study employs four items to measure GHRM, following Kim et al.'s [6] research. Scale items were "My organization provides adequate training to promote environmen-

tal management as a core organizational value”; “My organization considers how well employee is doing at being ecofriendly as part of their performance appraisals”; “My organization relates employee’s eco-friendly behavior to rewards and compensation”; and “My organization considers personal identity-environmental management fit in recruitment and selection”. Cronbach’s alpha is 0.91.

3.4. Employees’ Eco-Friendly Behavior

A three-item measure was used to assess employees’ eco-friendly behavior based on [6]. Scale items were “Before I get off work, I turn off the electric appliances, such as computers, TV monitor, etc.”; and “When I leave a room that is unoccupied, I turn off the light”. Cronbach’s alpha is 0.73.

3.5. Affective Commitment

Affective Commitment is measured using 3 items validated by Rego et al. [72]. Scale items were “I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization”; “I feel like «part of the family» at my organization”; and “I have a strong affection for this organization”. Cronbach’s alpha is 0.96.

3.6. Green Performance

To measure the employees’ perception of Green Performance, an instrument resulting from Kim et al.’s [6] study was used, consisting of the following seven items: “Reduced wastes”; “Conserved water usage”; “Conserved energy usage”; and “Reduced purchases of non-renewable materials, chemicals, and components”. Cronbach’s alpha is 0.91.

3.7. Demographic Variables

It also collected information on respondents’ demographics, such as gender, age, education level, and antiquity in the organization.

4. Results

Most participants were women (66.6%) and almost half of them (49.2%) of respondents are 39–54 years old, and 38.8% of participants are 22–38 years old. Regarding the education level, 59% have a higher education degree. Regarding antiquity, 34.5% of the sample works in the company from 1 to 5 years, 33.4% has more than 15 years, and 18.9% from 6 to 10 years.

The data were analyzed in consecutive stages, to better comprehend the results reached. The correlation matrix showed in what way the variables of the study correlated with each other will be made available. After this analysis, the study hypotheses were tested, notably, the mediation hypothesis which was expected in the model.

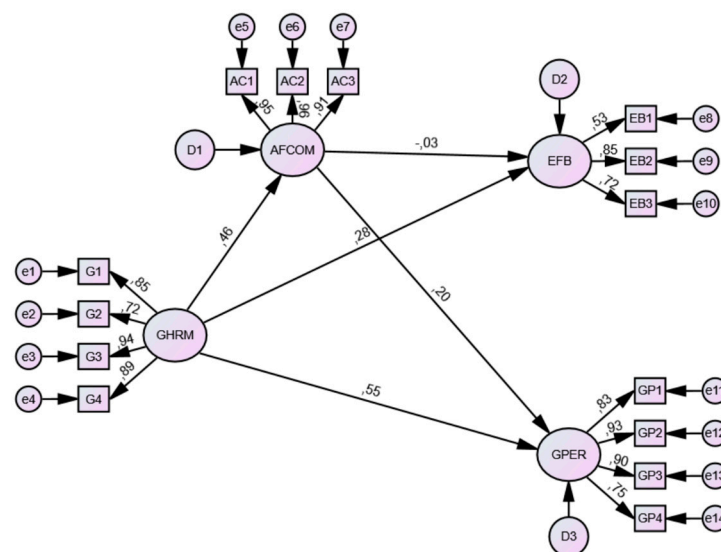
Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the variables. The analysis of Table 1 shows significant correlations between the variables. Regarding reliability, Cronbach’s alphas allowed for the development of the study, as they presented strong internal reliability values. Furthermore, the Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of all study variables were also tested, which presented solid values, following Fornell and Larcker’s [73] best recommendations.

Table 1. Correlation matrix.

	MEAN	S.D.	1.	2.	3.	4.	CR	AVE
1. GREEN HRM	2.95	1.22	(0.91)	-	-	-	0.914	0.729
2. AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT	4.09	0.974	0.430 **	(0.96)	-	-	0.958	0.884
3. ECO FRIENDLY BEHAVIOR	4.43	0.669	0.243 **	0.117 *	(0.73)	-	0.749	0.507
4. GREEN PERFORMANCE	3.70	0.957	0.618 **	0.437 **	0.328 **	(0.91)	0.915	0.732

Cronbach Alfa reported in parenthesis. ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 (2 tailed). * Correlation is significant at 0.05 (2 tailed).

The study variables are significant and positively correlated with each other. Green HRM is correlated with affective commitment ($r = 0.43$), as well as with eco-friendly behavior ($r = 0.24$) and green performance ($r = 0.62$). It is also possible to see that affective commitment is correlated with eco-friendly behavior ($r = 0.12$) and with green performance ($r = 0.44$), and that eco-friendly behavior is correlated with green performance ($r = 0.33$). Supplementary tests through the usage of SEM were conducted. The goodness-of-fit of the theoretical model showed a good fit of the data (χ^2 (72 df) = 189.31, $p \leq 0.05$; RMSEA = 0.06; CFI = 0.98; TLI = 0.97 with bootstrapping with sampling = 1.000). An alternative single-factor model of analysis has revealed unacceptable fit indices (χ^2 (77 df) = 2382.473, $p \leq 0.05$; RMSEA = 0.259; CFI = 0.53; TLI = 0.44). Figure 2 presents the theoretical model of analysis.

**Figure 2.** Theoretical model of analysis.

Analysis of the estimates of the model delivers evidence for the hypothesis testing. With effect, regarding the study's first hypothesis, predicting that *GHRM positively impacts affective commitment*, it is possible to confirm that GHRM has a positive impact on affective commitment (*standardized regression weight* = 0.463; sig < 0.05). It is also possible to confirm the study's second hypothesis, stating that GHRM positively impacts employees' eco-friendly behavior (*standardized regression weight* = 0.283; sig < 0.05), and to confirm the third hypothesis, foreseeing that green HRM positively impacts green performance (*standardized regression weight* = 0.554; sig < 0.05). Green HRM seems to be a relevant way of stimulating relevant and impactful indicators for organizations, specifically those directed to the creation of bonds between workers and organizations (affective commitment) as well as those directed towards the establishment of behavioral outputs aligned with the fulfillment of sustainability orientations, such as eco-friendly behavior or green performance.

For total mediation effects, the total effect and the indirect effect should be significant while the direct effect should be non-significant. For partial mediation effects, the direct effects should be significant and so should the indirect effects (via mediator) [74,75]. Table 2 shows the standardized total, direct, and indirect effects verified in the theoretical model.

Table 2. Theoretical model's standardized total, indirect, and direct effect.

Path	Total Effect (T.E)	Direct Effect (D.E)	Indirect Effect (I.E.) via Mediator
GHRM—Eco-friendly behavior	0.270; sig < 0.05	0.283; sig < 0.05	−0.013; (n.s.)
GHRM—Green Performance	0.646; sig < 0.05	0.554; sig < 0.05	0.091; sig < 0.05

Regarding the fourth hypothesis, stating that affective commitment mediates the relationship between GHRM and employees' eco-friendly behavior, there is no evidence of a significant mediation effect of affective commitment in the relation between GHRM with eco-friendly behavior (indirect effect = -0.013 ; p ns). The effect of GHRM on eco-friendly behavior shows a significant direct effect (direct effect = 0.283 ; $p < 0.05$), and thus, this result implies that GHRM practices should be seen as interesting paths for direct stimulation of employees' eco-friendly behaviors. Contrarily to what was foreseen, GHRM does not have the ability to activate a distal path towards the determination of employee's eco-friendly behavior, via affective commitment. On the other hand, with regard to the fifth hypothesis, predicting that affective commitment mediates the relationship between GHRM and green performance results have also shown the existence of a partial mediation effect of affective commitment in the relation between GRHM and green performance, in line with the study hypothesis. It is possible to see that the indirect effect of affective commitment in the relation between GHRM with green performance is significant (indirect effect = 0.091 ; $p < 0.05$), as well as the direct effect between GHRM and green performance (0.554 ; $p < 0.05$). This result implies that GHRM practices should be seen as interesting paths for direct and indirect stimulation of employees' green performance via employees' affective commitment. It seems that GHRM practices can develop an affective bond between employees and the organization, leading to the determination of a more aligned employees' performance with green orientations. GHRM not only seems to encourage eco-friendly behaviors but also nurtures a deeper emotional affective connection between employees and the organization. By developing this affective bond, GHRM seems to create a sense of belonging and shared purpose, which motivates employees to internalize the organization's green values and orientations. As a result, employees are more likely to adopt behaviors that align with the organization's environmental goals, supporting thus, green transition in workplaces. GHRM practices may contribute to the development of a workforce prepared to engage in environmentally friendly behaviors but also motivated to support the organization's green objectives. This alignment between employees' actions and the company's green orientation ultimately should enhance overall environmental performance, supporting green transition in workplaces.

5. Discussion

A competitive market forces organizations to maximize profits through innovative strategies that can stand out from their competitors [76]. In this sense, this study accepted the challenges of the research agenda of several authors [8,13,77], specifically when analyzing the economic scenario of the Portuguese context. Therefore, the impact of GHRM on employees' eco-friendly behavior and green performance was assessed, as well as the mediating role of affective commitment in these relationships with the confirmation of hypotheses H1, H2, H3, and H5, and the rejection of hypothesis H4.

In view of this, the results reinforced the positive impacts that the GHRM exerts on the affective commitment that the employee develops with the organization. Similar to

the results that were detected in similar studies by Ribeiro et al. [8], they were able to test the action of these practices on a psychosocial variable of cognitive construct. According to social identity theory, it is assumed that employees who have positive organizational values [21] are motivated to develop affective bonds with the organization. Thus, it is expected that organizations, by promoting green actions and GHRM, will nurture a positive corporate image and reputation [24] and that workers have more psychological availability to the organization and recognize their work as meaningful, thus promoting identification and affective commitment to their organization.

This study was also able to support what other authors found in their previous studies, namely on the positive impacts that GHRM promotes on employees' eco-friendly behavior [6,35,78]. The AMO framework can provide theoretical grounds for GHRM practices promoting green skills, and the incentive to perform in a more ecologically responsible way. GHRM practices increase the employees' environmental initiatives through enhanced human competencies. These human competencies stimulate the employees to adopt more eco-friendly behaviors [68].

These findings are consistent with prior research by Elshaer et al. [79] that found the association between GHRM and green performance which is a reflection of the benefits promoted by GHRM practices through careful green hiring, selection, and training. The benefits of implementing these strategies aimed at motivating employees, rewarding their green performance, and applying management geared towards engaging employees in business tasks influenced by an environmentally friendly organizational culture is a highlight of these results also found in other studies [4,16]. Consequently, this study corroborates the results of Shafaei et al. [80] in proving that implementing GHRM practices is one of the most successful methods to refine green performance, especially in organizations in the hospitality sector. For this matter, the study has implications regarding the impacts of green transition in workplaces, considering the hotels' management business specificities, due to the high number of hotels in the Portuguese hospitality sector. The AMO framework can be employed to discuss the interactive effects of GHRM practices on environmental performance [39]. For example, employee's abilities and skills obtained through green training programs are important for them to engage in green initiatives and activities, correct some environmental mistakes at work, and understand how to better participate in green opportunities in their organization [39]. Consequently, both employees' green performance and the organization's green performance are enhanced.

6. Conclusions

In accordance with the results, there is no evidence of a significant mediation effect of affective commitment in the relation between GHRM and eco-friendly behavior. This result implies that GHRM practices should be seen as interesting paths for direct stimulation of employees' eco-friendly behaviors. Contrary to what was foreseen, GHRM does not have the ability to activate a distal path towards the determination of employee's eco-friendly behavior, via affective commitment.

On the other hand, results have shown a partial mediation effect of affective commitment in the relation between GRHM and green performance, in accordance with the theoretical framework. This result implies that GHRM practices should be seen as interesting paths for direct and indirect stimulation of employees' green performance via employee's affective commitment.

According to SET, when employees perceive a positive exchange relationship with their organization through these GHRM practices, they are likely to reciprocate the organization [6]. This stimulates employees' commitment which, in turn, increases employees' green performance and, consequently, the organization's green performance. In addition, workplace support has a very positive effect on employees' well-being and affective commitment to companies, strengthening their bond and identification with the company [81]. Therefore, organizations that implement GHRM have greater opportunities to contribute positively to employee well-being, affective commitment, and green performance [76,82].

Thus, it suggests that GHRM practices have the ability to develop an affective bond between employees and the organization, leading to the determination of a more aligned employee performance with green orientations.

Thus, regarding our study's objectives, relevant empirical findings were achieved to clarify the nature of the relations between GHRM, employees' eco-friendly behavior, and green performance, and to clarify the nature of the mediator effect of affective commitment over these relations. With the clarification provided over our three objectives, we believe to have contributed to understanding with additional clarity how to improve green transition in workplaces through GHRM practices, as they have shown to provide significant impacts over relevant behavioral outputs regarding this matter.

6.1. Study Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

Firstly, data collection was conducted at a sole moment in time, which may have implied a risk of common method variance [83], and, though privacy and anonymity of responses were assured, there may have been some fear or social desirability, on the part of those involved. Thus, it is recommended that future researchers secure multiple sources, for example, or opt for data collection at distant times or use a double-source method.

Second, a non-probabilistic sample was surveyed, and thus, results have generalization limitations. To extend the generality of the results, it is suggested that another sampling method be adopted, which allows the study to be extended to a sample with more controlled characteristics and/or that future researchers replicate this research in different types of individuals from other sectors, for example.

Thirdly, although the study endeavored to understand the association between GHRM and employees' green behaviors and organizational green performance, it is important to explore the moderating influence of other individual and organizational variables, such as personality, employees' identification with the organization, organizational support and/or responsible leadership to better understand the relationships; alternative mediation mechanisms can also be explored to unfold the dynamics of the relationships between the variables under study [33].

6.2. Theoretical Contributions and Implications of the Study

This study has made some important contributions to the literature. First, investigating the effect of GHRM practices on employee green behaviors adds to the scarce literature on sustainability and the effects of GHRM in the Portuguese tourism industry [8].

Secondly, it establishes affective commitment as the variable through which GHRM exerts a significant influence on employees' green behaviors and performance, providing important insight into the relationship between the said variables under study. With this, this study advances the still existing limited literature of GHRM [6] and makes a distinct contribution to the field of environmental management.

Moreover, the present study has important theoretical implications, namely by providing empirical evidence on the potential of GHRM in stimulating employees' eco-friendly behaviors and green performance, demonstrating the importance and urgent need to implement more sustainable management practices in companies, especially in their HRM systems [33] in order to stimulate green transition in workplaces.

According to AMO theory, performance depends on a three-way interactive function of ability, motivation, and opportunity and it can be applied to predict organizational performance [37]. In line with this study's premises, the AMO framework proves value for examining the impact of GHRM practices on performance indicators aligned with environmental concerns. It provides key insights into how GHRM practices can influence green transition, particularly in workplace settings. The study's findings reinforce the theoretical understanding that GHRM practices significantly enhance environmental performance. Specifically, green training equips employees with essential environmental skills, green rewards, and incentives boost their motivation to adopt eco-friendly behaviors, and green policies offer opportunities to implement these behaviors. Through the AMO

framework, we can better understand how these elements interact to drive an organization's environmental performance, aligning with the broader goals of the green transition in the workplace. The adoption of GHRM practices should be seen as a relevant area of application of the AMO premises, based on the study's main considerations.

Furthermore, if considered the premises of Social Identity Theory, it is possible to add the significance of interpretation to the results, as GHRM seems to be able to enhance the affective psychological connection to the organization, leading workers to build positive identification with the company and to develop a deeper sense of affective bond with the organization. Therefore, Social Identity Theory seems very useful to explain the underlying mechanism through which, in the specific context of the impacts of GHRM, how organizations may promote affective commitment through GHRM practices. Thus, the adoption of GHRM principles of action should be seen as a relevant area of application of the Social Identity Theory's assumptions in regard to the important question of green transition in workplaces.

Also important to consider, is that the premises of Social Exchange Theory may also add additional insights to the theoretical rationale inviting organizations to invest in GHRM as a positive way of accelerating green transition in workplaces, via workers' environmental behavior stimulation. It was possible to justify that employees perceive GHRM in an exchange perspective, and as such, are likely to reciprocate in behaviors aligned with the ideals of GHRM, and thus, the stimulation of commitment and the adoption of environmental behaviors prone to green transition in workplaces are explained. Thus, the area of GHRM may be seen as a worthy area of application in regard to the contributions of the underlying mechanisms that explain workers' adherence to green transition relevant behaviors and attitudes development.

The study, by examining GHRM as a predictor of voluntary and task-related employee green behaviors, also contributes to the understanding of the antecedents of employee green behaviors and hence contributes to the literature on organizational behavior. By trying to understand the feelings of employees in the tourism sector in Portugal towards GHRM through its relationship with green performance, eco-friendly behaviors, and affective commitment, the results suggest that when organizations apply greener HRM, they can have a positive impact on their employees' attitudes and behaviors and thus contribute positively to the organization and society.

For practitioners, green transition in workplaces will likely persist to be a relevant challenge for the upcoming years. GHRM appears to be effective in fostering attitudes and behaviors that support green transition in workplaces. By integrating environmentally focused HR practices, organizations can better encourage employees to adopt sustainable attitudes and behaviors. Having this idea in mind, human resource managers should play a key role in shaping strategic HR policies that clearly outline the organization's commitment to sustainability. These policies should set expectations for employees regarding their contribution to environmental goals. By establishing criteria, organizations can create a sense of shared responsibility and encourage holistic involvement, where all employees feel engaged and aligned with the company's sustainability objectives. This comprehensive approach not only supports individual and collective green behaviors at work but also strengthens the organization's overall commitment to the green transition.

Once these strategic sustainability guidelines are in place, HR managers should develop annual action plans to continuously foster greener HRM practices. These plans should focus on key areas such as green training, which prepares employees with the skills and knowledge needed for sustainable practices in action; green recruitment and selection, which prioritizes candidates with eco-friendly values; green performance appraisal, which evaluates employees based on their contribution to environmental goals; and internal communication, which promotes sustainability initiatives and keeps employees informed and engaged. By regularly updating these action plans, HR managers can ensure that sustainability remains a permanent priority and that the organization constantly improves its processes to reduce the environmental impact of its activities.

Regarding training, HR managers should prioritize the development and implementation of programs specifically designed to introduce green habits in the workplace. These training sessions should cover practical, day-to-day actions that contribute to sustainability, such as water usage reduction by encouraging employees to use tap water instead of bottled water, implementing energy-saving procedures like turning off lights and equipment when not in use, and promoting efficient heating and cooling practices. Training should also focus on developing employees' digital skills to support the organization's transition toward a paper-free environment. By enhancing employees' proficiency in digital tools and systems, such as cloud-based document sharing, electronic signatures, and digital collaboration platforms, organizations can significantly reduce paper waste.

Regarding recruitment and selection, HR practitioners should prioritize recruitment strategies aimed at attracting candidates who are skilled and vocationally aligned with the organization's sustainability values. This involves crafting job postings and employer branding that highlight the company's commitment to sustainability, appealing to individuals who are passionate about environmental concerns. With the aim of achieving a solid pool of applicants aligned with sustainability concerns, the attraction strategies may include promoting (e.g., in job fairs, or in social networks) the organization's green initiatives, eco-friendly workplace policies, and long-term sustainability goals to create a stronger connection with potential applicants who share similar values. This will likely add to more traditional ways of attracting applicants [84]. In the selection process, managers should implement assessment techniques evaluating the candidate's knowledge of sustainability practices and their sensitivity to green transition issues in the workplace. This approach may ensure that selected candidates possess both the technical knowledge and the personal dedication to contribute to the organization's green objectives.

Regarding performance appraisal, HR managers should place a strong emphasis on recognizing employees' alignment with the organization's sustainability and green transition objectives. This could be achieved by integrating specific sustainability-related criteria into performance appraisal evaluations. For example, employees who demonstrate eco-friendly behaviors, such as reducing energy usage, recycling, or participating in green initiatives, would receive acknowledgment for their contributions to the organization's environmental goals. HR managers could also introduce symbolic rewards to further motivate employees, such as public recognition, certificates, or awards that highlight the employee's positive environmental impact. Such symbolic gestures can be highly motivating, as they affirm the individual's alignment with the organization's values while fostering a workplace culture focused on sustainability.

Lastly, organizations should consistently communicate their green initiatives within the company through investment in internal communication. By fostering transparency and keeping employees informed about ongoing and upcoming sustainability efforts, organizations can foster a solid and genuine culture of environmental awareness. Furthermore, and beyond communication efforts, organizations should be involved in internal sustainability actions with the participation of the HR staff. It is crucial to provide employees with opportunities to engage in green initiatives, such as through volunteer programs, sustainability committees, or eco-friendly projects. When employees are given a platform to participate, they will likely feel more involved and connected to the company's sustainability project. This sense of involvement, combined with regular recognition and encouragement, can significantly have an impact on employees to contribute meaningfully to the organization's green objectives. Ultimately, this inclusive approach may not only enhance individual engagement, but also strengthen the overall success of the organization's sustainability efforts, aligning everyone toward shared green outcomes of the sustainability project, and thus, improving green transition in workplaces.

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